

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 PA-02 H-02
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SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12 MCT-01 OMB-01
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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:DP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND
PA/PRESS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM- MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

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O 132228Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USCINCEUR
DOD
JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
USICA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC 0000
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS POUCH

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD; TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JUNE 13, 1978

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR JUNE 13. FYI ONLY,
OFFICER PRESENT TODAY WAS TOM RESTON.

I HAVE A STATEMENT TO MAKE: REPORTS FROM OUR EMBASSY
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IN BEIRUT INDICATE THAT A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN
FIGHTING EARLIER TODAY BETWEEN RIVAL MARONITE CHRISTIAN
FACTIONS NEAR THE TOWN OF EHDEN IN NORTHERN LEBANON. AMONG
THOSE KILLED IN THIS UNFORTUNATE TRAGEDY WERE ANTOINE
FRANJIEH AND MEMBERS OF HIS IMMEDIATE FAMILY. MR. FRANJIEH
WAS THE SON OF THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF LEBANON.

WE DEPLORE THIS SENSELESS VIOLENCE. IT COMPLICATES THE
TASK OF THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON IN RESTORING STABILITY
TO THE COUNTRY AND UNDERScores THE NEED FOR ALL LEBANESE TO
PUT ASIDE FACTIONAL RIVALRY AND WORK FOR THE UNITY OF
LEBANON.

Q. WILL YOU EXPLAIN THE REASON WHY WE CHOSE TO VOLUNTEER
A STATEMENT ON THIS PARTICULAR ROUND OF VIOLENCE WHEN THE

STATE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT VOLUNTEER STATEMENTS ON A LOT
OF OTHER VIOLENCE IN LEBANON AND OTHER COUNTRIES? WHAT
IS THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND? THAT IS THE PURPOSE OF
THIS STATEMENT NOW?

A. I THINK THE TONE OF THE STATEMENT INDICATES THAT THERE
IS CONTINUING VIOLENCE IN LEBANON, THAT NUMBERS OF PEOPLE
CONTINUE TO BE KILLED. WE ARE DEPLORING THIS VIOLENCE
AND BELIEVE THAT NOW IS THE TIME TO UNDERScore THE NEED
FOR THOSE ON THE GROUND IN LEBANON TO PUT ASIDE THEIR
FACTIONAL DIFFERENCES AND WORK FOR THE RESOLUTION OF THESE

PROBLEMS. FROM TIME TO TIME, WE DO MAKE STATEMENTS ABOUT VIOLENCE.

Q. YES, BUT YOU ARE VERY SELECTIVE IN THAT. THERE IS CONTINUING VIOLENCE IN A LOT OF PARTS OF THE WORLD. I AM JUST TRYING TO GET A RATIONAL EXPLANATION OF WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF VOLUNTEERING A STATEMENT ON THIS PARTICULAR EPISODE, WHAT YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE BY IT, WHY THE GOVERNMENT HERE SHOULD SPEAK UP AT THIS TIME.
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A. I AM NOT SURE I HAVE A RATIONALE FOR DOING IT AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME, BUT I THINK THAT IT EXPRESSES OUR CONCERN AT THE CONTINUING VIOLENCE IN LEBANON AND, YOU KNOW, WE OFTEN MAKE STATEMENTS ABOUT VIOLENCE ELSEWHERE.

Q. YOU OFTEN IGNORE VIOLENCE ELSEWHERE. WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE BY THIS STATEMENT?

A. WE ARE EXPRESSING A VIEW OF OUR GOVERNMENT THAT WE CERTAINLY WISH THOSE ELEMENTS WHO WANT TO LAY THIS CONTINUING TRAGEDY BY THE BY AND MOVE FORWARD INTO THE RESTORATION OF THE UNITY OF THAT STATE, WE WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT WE ARE WITH THEM AND THAT THIS IS GETTING TO BE A SENSELESS AND TRAGIC SITUATION WHERE PEOPLE ARE BEING KILLED ROUTINELY.

Q. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE ISRAELIS TO BE UNDER OBLIGATION TO HAND OVER CONTROL OF THE PORTION OF SOUTHERN LEBANON WHICH THEY ARE VACATING TO THE UNITED NATIONS FORCES? DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT TO BE THE SENSE OF UN RESOLUTION 425?

A. I DON'T HAVE VERY MUCH HERE ON WHAT IS GOING ON IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AT THE MOMENT. LET ME SAY WHAT I CAN.

THE ISRAELIS HAVE COMPLETED THEIR WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON TODAY AS THEY HAVE SAID THEY WOULD. WE WELCOME THIS DEVELOPMENT.

AS WE HAVE NOTED BEFORE ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, UNIFIL IS CARRYING OUT ITS DIFFICULT MISSION SKILLFULLY AND EFFECTIVELY. BUT WE ARE STILL GETTING REPORTS IN FROM THE FIELD TODAY AND WE DO NOT HAVE FULL REPORTS YET AND
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UNTIL WE GET FULL REPORTS ON EXACTLY WHAT THE SITUATION IS, WE WILL HAVE NO FURTHER COMMENT AT THIS TIME.

Q. MY QUESTION DOESN'T GO TO WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE GROUND. MY QUESTION GOES TO THE INTERPRETATION BY THE

UNITED STATES OF RESOLUTION 425. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATION TO BE THAT WE HAND OVER TO UNIFIL RATHER THAN TO SOME OTHER FACTION?

A. I WILL TAKE THAT QUESTION.

Q. WHAT IS THE U.S. VIEW OF THE BEST SECURITY MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO PROTECT THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF SOUTHERN LEBANON NOW THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE WITHDRAWING?

A. I DON'T HAVE A VIEW ON THAT THAT I CAN OFFER YOU. I HAVE TAKEN THE QUESTION OF WHAT WE SEE AS THE INTERPRETATION OF 425. 425 REMAINS THE BASIS OF OUR POLICY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

Q. THIS BEING THE DAY THAT THE WITHDRAWAL IS COMPLETED, ONE OF THE MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE BEEN PROTECTED BY THE ISRAELIS NOW THAT THE ISRAELI PROTECTION IS GONE. HOW DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT FEEL ABOUT THE BEST WAY TO SECURE THEIR FUTURE; LEAVE IT TO LEBANON OR LEAVE IT TO THE UN OR WHAT?

A. I THINK ULTIMATELY, AS YOU KNOW, WE BELIEVE AND SUPPORT THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND THE COHESION AND UNITY OF THE STATE OF LEBANON AND WE ARE IN FAVOR OF THE CENTRAL LEBANESE GOVERNMENT RE-ESTABLISHING AND REASSERTING ITS CONTROL THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THAT IS, WE THINK, THE ULTIMATE BEST SOLUTION.

Q. WHEN YOU SAY THE UNIFIL IS CARRYING OUT ITS MISSION
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SKILLFULLY AND EFFECTIVELY, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

A. THAT IS A REITERATION OF OUR VIEW OF HOW THEY HAVE COMPORTED THEMSELVES EVER SINCE THEY WENT IN THERE.

Q. IN PRACTICAL TERMS, WHAT IS IT? ARE THEY KEEPING THE PALESTINIANS OUT?

A. I DON'T HAVE A PRECISE SIT-REP ON HOW UNIFIL IS DOING WITH REGARD TO THAT PARTICULAR PROBLEM AT THE MOMENT. WE ARE REITERATING OUR SUPPORT FOR THE PROFESSIONALISM AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN COMPORTING THEMSELVES EVER SINCE THEY WENT INTO SOUTH LEBANON.

Q. WHEN YOU CHECK THOSE REPORTS THAT YOU ARE CHECKING, MAYBE THAT IS ONE OF THE THINGS YOU MIGHT LOOK INTO; THIS PALESTINIAN SITUATION. HOW RAPIDLY ARE THEY MOVING INTO THE VACUUM, IF AT ALL?

A. I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT. I AM NOT GOING TO BE IN A POSITION TO HELP YOU ON THAT.

Q. DO YOU SEE ANY RELATION BETWEEN WHAT HAPPENED IN THE NORTH TODAY AND WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE SOUTH?

A. INsofar AS THERE IS CONTINUING VIOLENCE IN LEBANON, IT IS A PART OF A PATTERN OF VIOLENCE THAT THAT COUNTRY SO TRAGICALLY HAS BEEN WITNESSING OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS AND WE ARE EXPRESSING OUR SYMPATHY TO THE VICTIMS OF THAT VIOLENCE, WHEREVER IT OCCURS IN THE COUNTRY, THAT THESE THINGS CAN BE PEACEFULLY RESOLVED.

Q. YOU SEEM TO BE SAYING THAT UNIFIL'S MISSION IS TO UNCLASSIFIED

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COMPORT ITSELF WITH PROFESSIONALISM. I AM TRYING TO ASK YOU TO DEFINE WHAT THE MISSION IS THAT YOU HAVE PRAISED HERE THAT THEY ARE CARRYING OUT SO WELL.

A. I THINK THE MISSION OF UNIFIL IS SET FORTH IN RESOLUTION 425 OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

Q. A FOLLOW-UP QUESTION: ARE THEY KEEPING THE PALESTINIANS OUT? I MEAN HOW DO YOU SAY THIS UNLESS YOU KNOW WHETHER THEY ARE DOING THAT.

A. I SAID THAT I DID NOT HAVE A SITUATION REPORT ON THE -- EXACTLY A QUANTIFIABLE REPORT OF HOW MANY PALESTINIANS, WHERE THEY ARE AND WHAT THE SITUATION IS. I AM JUST NOT IN A POSITION TO OFFER IT TO YOU.

Q. MEMBERS OF UNIFIL HAVE APPEARED ON TELEVISION AND BEEN QUOTED IN PRINT AS SAYING ARMED PALESTINIANS WALK RIGHT PAST THEIR CHECK POSTS AS THOUGH THEY WEREN'T THERE. I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU COME OUT AND SAY THEY ARE CARRYING OUT THE MISSION SKILLFULLY AND EFFECTIVELY. YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN WHAT YOU MEAN BY THAT.

A. LET ME SEE IF I CAN GET YOU AN ELABORATION ON THAT.

Q. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT CONSIDER SLEIMAN FRANJIEH, THE FATHER OF ANTOINE FRANJIEH, AS A CLOSE FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES?

A. I DON'T HAVE A CHARACTERIZATION.

Q. ON THE ESMail CASE, THERE WAS A REPORT THAT ESMail HAD BEEN ARRESTED ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION SUPPLIED TO HIM BY OUR GOVERNMENT. IS THIS A SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT THAT WE HAVE WITH ISRAEL? OR DO WE ROUTINELY TELL OTHER GOVERNMENTS ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF THEIR NATIONALS IN THE

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UNITED STATES?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON THAT, REED. I
GENERALLY DON'T DISCUSS WHAT DISPOSITION WE MAKE OF
OUR INTELLIGENCE.

Q. WELL IS IT TRUE THAT HE WAS ARRESTED ON THE BASIS OF
INFORMATION SUPPLIED TO HIM BY OUR GOVERNMENT?

A. I REALLY DON'T KNOW. I THINK THE QUESTION HAS BEEN
RAISED HERE BEFORE, AND I JUST DON'T RECALL WHAT THE
ANSWER WAS -- IF WE WERE ABLE TO GIVE AN ANSWER.

CHRISTOPHER

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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